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*Agency of Education*

October 2014

Dear Vermont Educator,

We are pleased to tell you about an exciting opportunity from the Vermont Agency of Education available to all Vermont supervisory unions/districts.

As you know, the Agency is committed to ensuring a high quality, personalized education for every student in our state. To this end, many Vermont educators have been integrally involved in moving Vermont education towards a proficiency-based learning system that provides multiple and flexible pathways to success. This has led to the creation and endorsement of a revised Rule 2000 Education Quality Standards, and legislative approval of Act 77. Taken together, these policies put Vermont on the national forefront of rethinking education.

None of this would have happened without the continual strong efforts displayed by educators across Vermont classrooms, Vermont's education professional associations, and assorted educational support groups. We also know this is hard work, and that for it to be truly meaningful and impactful for students, most of the work must be done at the local level. Our role as an Agency is to establish a context that makes space for you to innovate on behalf of our students and to support you in those efforts.

To support this, the Agency is distributing a Request for Proposals that will provide grant funding that will enable supervisory unions/districts to participate in a series of professional development seminars: *Proficiency-Based Learning: A Systemic Approach*. These two-day, every month seminars running from December through June will provide guidance, technical assistance, professional development, consultations, and planning time to investigate these next steps, create an action plan, and build capacity on a local level. We have teamed up with an organization familiar to many of you and well versed in Vermont efforts, the Great Schools Partnership, a non-profit organization that has supported schools in Vermont through the League of Innovative Schools, the New England Secondary School Consortium, the Education Quality Standards task force, and the Personal Learning Plans task force.

These seminars will consist of two days per month for a team of 5-7 people from your supervisory union/district. Participating supervisory unions/districts will have access to:

- Monthly 2-day workshops focused on specific topics, time for facilitated planning with your colleagues, opportunities to share practice and network with other schools.
- Monthly webinars on specific topics, questions, or strategies for implementation.
- Email and phone support from Great Schools Partnership for questions and dilemmas in your supervisory union/district.



The series is focused on these outcomes:

- 1) Understand the elements of proficiency-based learning and the requirements as outlined in state board policy (Education Quality Standards);
- 2) Understand the elements of personal learning plans and the requirements as outlined in the Education Quality Standards and Act 77;
- 3) Each supervisory union/district team will have designed and planned professional development pertaining to these topics within the 2014/15 school year;
- 4) At least one member of each team will be trained as a local leader for implementation of proficiency-based learning; and
- 5) Each supervisory union/district team will have a three-year plan for implementation.

The Agency will be offering grants of \$22,500 for each supervisory union/district to apply to this series. These funds will be used to pay participation costs for your team (\$17,500) with the remainder used to cover travel, stipends, or other costs associated with participation.

Interested Supervisory Unions/Districts should fill out and return the enclosed application form electronically to Allison Keating at [Allison.Keating@state.vt.us](mailto:Allison.Keating@state.vt.us) by October 23, 2014. Please feel free to call or contact John Fischer with any questions. He can be reached at 802-479-1166 or via email at [john.fischer@state.vt.us](mailto:john.fischer@state.vt.us).

As always, thank you for the ongoing dedication you have to improving the lives of young people across Vermont. We are making tremendous progress through our collaborative efforts and are certain to see continued success.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education  
Vermont Agency of Education

